The work which drives us forward in the year 2003 is closely linked to the main results we achieved at the end of last year. The World Heritage Committee has made it very clear what our objectives should be. We must work to strengthen the credibility of a representative and geographically balanced World Heritage List, as we work for further effective conservation of World Heritage properties. In order to develop effective capacity-building measures we will continue our task of providing assistance for preparing nominations to the List. And in the all important field of communication, our aim remains the improvement of public awareness.

In order to carry out all of these goals we have developed a number of tools. As the Congress of Experts in Venice showed, the ever-increasing area of partnerships with the private sector will enable us to move forward more rapidly. We are also consolidating our technical action through a series of programmes (such as regional programmes focusing on Africa) and new partners (for example, linking tourism and conservation).

As we move forward, we need to continue with reforms in our working methods and procedures, finalize them and put them into practice. We will need to work with the Committee and Advisory Bodies in order to finalize the revised Operational Guidelines, taking into account the need to clarify certain issues, such as the procedures for inscription of properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

This is a time of year when the World Heritage Centre receives many nominations for inscription on the World Heritage List, some from countries which have no sites inscribed. We are now in the second year of the Committee’s decision to limit the number of nominations to thirty. We are working with the Committee, Advisory Bodies and States Parties to improve the quality of nominations, to define boundaries and ultimately to improve our ability to ensure protection.

We all look forward to working with you in the year ahead!

Francesco Bandarin, Director, World Heritage Centre

José Maria Balcells, Director of Culture, Cultural and Natural Heritage, Council of Europe, at the International Congress of Experts: World Heritage 2002 Shared Legacy, Common Responsibility, November 2002, Venice, Italy.
Cooperation Agreement with Belgian Government

On 28 November 2002 the Belgian government and the WHC signed a new co-operation agreement in order to improve the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

Under the agreement the Belgian Federal Office for Scientific, Technical and Cultural Heritage (OSTC) is to provide a yearly budget of 150,000 euros for research related to the implementation of the Global Strategy and technical assistance to improve information tools for the conservation of sites or new nominations. The aim is to increase public awareness of conservation and threats to World Heritage sites.

The OSTC is a two-year project to establish a monitoring database for the five World Heritage sites in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which are inscribed on the World Heritage List.

The site of Astur, the first capital of the Assyrian Empire and the religious centre of Assyria, has been nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List. Astur, together with South Africa and the USA, will be one of the focus areas of the new agreement. The site of Astur is unique in the world and is of great cultural and historical significance. It is also of great environmental importance, as it is home to a number of rare and endangered species.

The project will develop a database for the site, using satellite images and vegetation data, and establish a database which integrates existing spatial data from ecological monitoring as well as data from field surveys. The database will be shared with other countries and organizations.

The project will work closely with the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation and various conservation NGOs active in the DRC. The project will complement other work carried out by the WHC and funded by the UN Foundation and the Directorate-General for Development of the Belgian government to help the DRC’s sites threatened by the armed conflict in the region. Once the project comes to an end, conclusions will be drawn on how to integrate modern remote sensing techniques with field-based monitoring activities to improve World Heritage conservation.

Periodic Reporting in Asia and the Pacific

The WHC and the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO organized a Workshop for the Preparation of Regional Synthesis Periodic Reports on Natural and Mixed World Heritage Properties in Asia and the Pacific, held from 20-22 January in Hanoi, Viet Nam. The meeting was supported by the World Heritage Centre, the Ministry of Culture and Information and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam. Participants came from China, India, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam. As well as the representatives from IUCN, the WHC and the regional and national World Heritage offices in Jakarta and Hanoi.

The purpose of the workshop was to prepare the Regional Synthesis Report on the basis of the national periodic reports submitted by the States Parties. Discussions were held on how to prepare the Regional Synthesis Report, and on how to ensure on-going participation of the States Parties in the Report. States Parties’ representatives provided valuable insights and contributions to the preparation of the report. Participants also agreed on the content and structure for the Report, which is to be presented to the World Heritage Committee at its 27th session in Suzhou, China in June 2003.

Dam in Iraq

UNESCO organized a mission to Iraq from 18–28 November 2002 to assess the impact of archaeological sites from the flooding of a large area consequent to the decision to build a dam on the Tigres River south of Mosul, which is due to be completed by 2006.

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What is the way forward for heritage conservation?

Conservation needs in the developing countries are different from those in the developed world. As with environment, the needs of heritage conservation and development should be balanced. For this, new and innovative approaches must be considered for sustainable conservation and management of heritage.

We must also recognize that heritage protection is a continuous process. Indeed, inscription on the List is a vital link in this process. Even though India, for example, has a well-established environmental and archaeological conservation set-up and has programmes that have contributed to exploiting the heritage potential in the region, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and national and international NGOs have successfully contributed to reinforcing commitment of policymakers, raising awareness among communities, and upgrading skills for protection of heritage.

The World Parks Congresses

The fifth IUCN World Parks Congress will be held in Durban, South Africa from 8-17 September 2003. The World Heritage Centre is taking an active role in the planning and presentation of one of the ‘cross-cutting’ themes of the Congress: World Heritage.

The aim of the IUCN World Parks Congress, which meets every ten years as the main global forum for protected areas, is to ensure that global awareness of protected areas is increased.

The Congress expects some 2,500 participants, who will debate the ‘frontier issues’ of protected areas. The Congress is to adopt the ‘Durban Accord’, a succinct joint policy statement for Protected Areas in the 21st century. It will produce a user manual of case studies, best practice and recommended steps ahead, all based on the main workshops and the cross-cutting themes (World Heritage, Marine Protected Areas, and Communities & Equity issues). Governance issues for protected areas, new models for their management, including the involvement of traditional owners will be discussed.

Durban will provide a forum for the development of strategic alliances between protected areas and other sectors, such as tourism, forestry, water supply and mining. The Congress is also expected to develop a range of lasting initiatives for protected areas in Africa.

Interview with Indian Ambassador to UNESCO

The Newsletter asked H.E. Mrs Neelam D.Sabharwal, India’s Ambassador and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO, what she felt was the greatest challenge facing UNESCO today.

The Committee is uniquely positioned to promote the World Heritage Convention on the principles of equity, cooperation and common concern of all its States Parties. The Committee has done important work in recognizing new concepts of cultural and natural heritage over the past 30 years to bring greater representativeness to the World Heritage List. But even today, 30 percent of the countries outside the List are from one region. In my view, the solution lies not merely in formulating new criteria but in creating additional programmes and proactive processes for improving technical assistance and identifying local expertise in under-represented countries.

However, the implementation of World Heritage based artificially on a country quota approach would be to misread the very rationale of the programme, which has to be seen in a much wider perspective of sustainability – the vastness and cultural diversity of the wealth and value of the heritage. Instead of departing from basic principles, it is important to allocate resources to this programme commensurate with the magnitude of its tasks.

What is your assessment of the reforms being undertaken?

The reforms are making an experimental basis. The Committee has taken some initiatives to redress the geographical imbalance including a decision to restrict nominations to 30 countries. The Committee is in the process of improving information tools for the World Heritage List.

What role do you have to play in the five World Heritage sites in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which are inscribed on the World Heritage List?

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is the country facing the greatest challenges in the protection of its World Heritage sites. The DRC has an area of over 2.3 million square kilometres and is home to more than 100 million people. The country has a diverse range of cultural and natural heritage, including national parks, forests, and wetlands.

After a break for the Venice Congress of Experts, the Newsletter returns to conversations with Ambassadors from States Parties on the Committee.

Interview with South African Ambassador to UNESCO

The Newsletter spoke to H.E. Mrs Thuthukile Edy Skweyiya, Ambassador of South Africa to France and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO.

There are many spin-offs from inscription on the World Heritage List. Parks are where people live, where they get their nutrition, their medication. The local communities have been brought in to the management of these areas. The advantage of the designation is not only the conservation of the earth’s resources but also the promotion of eco-tourism. This is sustainable development in a real sense.

What role does South Africa have to play on the Committee?

On the Operational Guidelines, South Africa is a leading country consulted towards developed countries. We have to reform in a way that will accommodate developing countries, encourage them to put forward nominations to the List. We should have the same number of sites from the South as from the North.

The WHC and the Viet Nam National Commission for UNESCO organized a Workshop for the Preparation of Regional Synthesis Periodic Reports on Natural and Mixed World Heritage Properties in Asia and the Pacific, held from 20-22 January in Hanoi, Viet Nam. The meeting was supported by the World Heritage Centre, the Ministry of Culture and Information and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam. Participants came from China, India, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam. As well as the representatives from IUCN, the WHC and the regional and national World Heritage offices in Jakarta and Hanoi.

The purpose of the workshop was to prepare the Regional Synthesis Report on the basis of the national periodic reports submitted by the States Parties. Discussions were held on how to prepare the Regional Synthesis Report, and on how to ensure on-going participation of the States Parties in the Report. States Parties’ representatives provided valuable insights and contributions to the preparation of the report. Participants also agreed on the content and structure for the Report, which is to be presented to the World Heritage Centre at its 27th session in Suzhou, China in June 2003.

Regional follow-up actions for the next six years were elaborated, including some specific recommendations to the World Heritage Committee for the implementation of the Convention in this region. The workshop also looked at capacity building and training activities for natural heritage and protected areas relating to the World Parks Congress in September 2003.

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The Italian Ambassador to UNESCO: Shared Legacy, Common Responsibility

Following the success of the International Congress of Experts, "World Heritage 2002: Shared Legacy, Common Responsibility," organized by UNESCO with the support of the Italian Government, held in Venice, Italy, in November 2002, to mark the 30th anniversary of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the Newsletter asked Italian Ambassador and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO, H.E. Mr. Francesco Casarsa, what this meeting and the nine workshops preceding it, had accomplished.

What would you say was the importance of this Congress?

I think there is an important political aspect to this Congress. After September 11th it has become all the more necessary to affirm the diversity of culture and avoid uniformization. But our aim is also to avoid the expansion of the "turf". Terrorism and fundamentalism develop where there is a lack of understanding and respect for the culture of others. Better communication can be used as an instrument of culture so that people become aware of the cultural identity of others.

What do you see as the task ahead?
The Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Culture of Italy, Nicola Bongi, is going to invite States Parties to attend a one-day follow-up meeting in May at the Villa d’Este World Heritage site at Tivoli, near Rome, so that we can continue the momentum generated by the Congress of Experts and the nine workshops in order to improve the exchange of views and identify the best solutions.

Jean Mamba and Kambo Simbaibbi and Karl Ruf

The UNESCO/UNEP programme for the World Heritage sites of the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Biodiversity Conservation in Regions of Armed Conflict, mourns the loss of five of its key people. On 8 December, 2002 Jean Nlamba, an honest, reliable and excellent administrator and dedicated conservationist, lost to two dozen experts, selected for their professional and personal qualities.

In line with the Global Strategy adopted in 1994 by the World Heritage Committee to encourage a more balanced and representative World Heritage list, the expert meeting was organized around a series of presentations of properties and sites of modern heritage in the Americas. These were prepared by individual experts who conducted comparative analyses and inductive exercises to arrive at a definition of general issues related to the identification and conservation of modern heritage through a discussion of actual cases. Such sites as La Pata, and Buenavista in Argentina, Atenas de Flamigos in Ro. de Janeiro, Valparaiso in Chile, Casa Estudio Luis Barragan, Mexico, the canal area in Panama and the parkway system in Minneapolis were examined, among others, as case studies.

The meeting recommended the encouragement of identification and selection of modern heritage properties. It called for concerted efforts to be made by States Parties to include proposals for modern heritage in their tentative lists. Specific follow-up proposals included production of a reference document on modernisation, modernisation and the different expressions of modern heritage for the Americas and the Caribbean as a tool to help people better understand, identification, protection and listing of this heritage. The meeting also recommended the development of a set of indicators for the monitoring of, and continued focus on, monuments, buildings, urban complexes, industrial or engineering works, sites and cultural landscapes of modern heritage from the 19th and 20th centuries.

The Congress of Experts was entirely financed by the Italian Government, held in Venice, Italy, in conjunction with the universities, participated in organizing the nine workshops which preceded the Congress, so that some 150 participants could share their scientific expertise.

Modern Heritage for the Americas

Some 50 people attended a regional meeting on modern heritage for the Americas, held from 15 – 13 December 2002 in Monterrey, Mexico, organized by the World Heritage Centre and the Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia (INAH), with the support of the government of the Netherlands, the government of Nuevo Leon and the City of Monterrey.

The week of activities in and around Venice was first of all a real tribute to the Convention and its universal vocation for the safeguard and preservation of both cultural and natural heritage. The workshops and the Experts’ Congress also emphasized how the Convention has reached out to regions and countries not represented in the early years. Finally, great consideration was given to the work of conservation and how it is financed. It is clear that in order to send experts into the field, furnish dossiers and management reports, carry out training and capacity building, more money and personnel are needed. The States Parties’ mandatory contribution of one percent of their annual UNESCO dues is clearly not sufficient. Extra-budgetary funds, such as the Italian Funds-in-Trust, are significant. But there is a growing need to open up the management of the Convention to partnerships with financial groups, banks and private companies. Venice showed how the public and private sectors can and should work together.

The Italian Ambassador to UNESCO, H.E. Mr. Francesco Casarsa, discussed the task ahead with UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura.

The UNESCO/UNEP programme for the World Heritage sites of the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Biodiversity Conservation in Regions of Armed Conflict, mourns the loss of five of its key people. On 8 December, 2002 Jean Nlamba, an honest, reliable and excellent administrator and dedicated conservationist, lost to two dozen experts, selected for their professional and personal qualities.

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Five Key Conservationists in the DRC Die

The UNESCO/UNEP programme for the World Heritage sites of the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Biodiversity Conservation in Regions of Armed Conflict, mourns the loss of five of its key people. On 8 December, 2002 Jean Mamba, Karl Ruf and Kambo Simbaibbi were on a road near Bori, DRC, when a bus, going at high speed, hit their vehicle head on, killing all three instantly. Earlier in the year Jean Mafuko Girineza and Muhindo Mesi died of natural causes.

Kambo Simbaibbi’s Hacipointe had worked for the GIC Euplo project since 1988, in charge of their research programme, and since 2000, as Programme and Research Officer. In the words of a colleague, “he was a friend to the job.”

Jean Mafuko Girineza, who died in March 2002 of a liver tumour, was Chief Warden at Garamba National Park. When the first civil war broke out in 1996, he remained at the Park despite considerable personal risk, and was able to get anti-poaching patrols started again even though occupying forces remained in the Park and had discarded the firearms. For a word-and-a-half he was counterpart in the Co-ordination unit of the UNESCO project.

Conservation-in-Chief Muhindo Mesi, who died of a terminal illness in September 2002, was well-respected. He had wide experience in the Garamba and Virunga World Heritage sites.

We pay homage to these five valuable colleagues and salute all they have done. Our deepest sympathy goes out to their families.
Within the framework of the Global Strategy, a Workshop on Potential Natural and Mixed World Heritage Nominations from Central Asia was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan from 16-19 December in order to assist notably Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in identifying potential natural and mixed sites for World Heritage nomination. 33 representatives from the States Parties in Central Asia, as well as experts and the IUCN, ICOMOS and the WWF participated.

The German World Heritage Foundation has been formed by the two Hanseatic towns of Stralsund and Wismar (newly inscribed on the World Heritage List) in order to help preserve World Heritage sites and to assist potential World Heritage sites in preparing their nominations. Projects have already been carried out in Mongolia and Ukraine. Cities, communities and private partners can contact Brigitte Mayerhofer: +49-30-3765101, e-mail: info@welterbeoffnung.de or consult the Foundation’s homepage: www.welterbeoffnung.de

Entries are now being accepted for the UNESCO Asia-Paciﬁc Heritage 2003 Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation. Projects involving buildings more than 50 years old and which were completed within the last 5 years are eligible. Complete programme information is available at http://www.whc.unesco.org/culturalheritageawards. The deadline is 31 March 2003.

The ﬁrst two issues of World Heritage Manuals and Papers are now available. Consultant Arthur Pedersen’s Managing Tourism at World Heritage Sites: A Practical Manual for World Heritage Site Managers and UNESCO’s Preservation of World Heritage Sites: Past, Looking to the Future organized by the Center for Heritage Nominations from Central Asia, Ege and moderated by François Vigier, Director of the CUDS. On 3 Dec. Mr Bandarin attended the UN General Assembly session dedicated to the UN Year for Cultural Heritage. Tamás Fejedy, World Heritage Committee Chairman, along with the President of the Hungarian Parliament Katalin Szily, the Minister of Culture Gabor Garoute, and the President of the National World Heritage Committee Kalman Varga, all spoke at celebrations in Budapest in Dec. to mark the 30th anniversary of the Convention. The celebrations, in the spirit of the Budapest Declaration, were, Mr Fejedy said, ‘an occasion to develop communication and sensitize the public about World Heritage issues.’ From 2-12 Jan., Mr Bandarin was in Cuba to review the state of Conservation of World Heritage sites. He met with Marta Arjona, President of the National Cultural Heritage Council and Eusebio Leal, Historian of La Habana. He also met the Director of the UNESCO regional ofﬁce for culture, Mr Francisco Lacayo Parajón. WHC Deputy-Director, Dr. Baldev Singh, attended a seminar on the Forum on European World Heritage Cities on 17 Jan. in Luxembourg where he met with Guy Dockendorf, Director-General of the Ministry of Culture. With the France-UNESCO Convention, she was in Berlin from 13-15 Jan. to help prepare a nomination dossier. She was also in New Delhi from 25-30 Nov. to participate in the national seminar for periodic reporting, organised by the Archeological Survey of India. Natarajan Ishwaran, WHO Cultural Heritage of the Natural Heritage Section, was in the USA from 29 Jan-4 Feb. to meet with WHO and other partners. Carmen Negrín, Chief WHO/CAC, Unit, along with Mariamka Kukkohen, Associate Expert, were in Bonn, Netherlands to Antilles, Curacá and Los Roques, Venezuela from 5-9 Dec. to discuss with authorities about a transboundary marine World Heritage nomination in the southern Caribbean Islands. From 1-4 Dec. Ms. Negrín was in Coraci, Netherlands Antilles, to participate in the celebration of the 5th anniversary of the inscription of Willemstad on the List. Sarah Titchen, WHC, Chief Policy and Statutory Implementation Unit, along with WHO consultant Martinus-Luca Bascu attended an expert meeting in Brussels from 9-12 Dec. on the preparation of a draft declaration concerning the intentional destruction of cultural heritage. Mechtild Rössler, WHC, Chief Europe & North America Unit, participated in the ﬁrst periodic reporting meeting for the European Union organized by Canada and the USA with the site managers and staff from the National Park Service and Parks Canada in Los Angeles, USA from 13-16 Jan. She attended the conference on ‘Contemporary Architectures and Design in Historic Urban Areas’, in Riga, Latvia, from 5-7 Dec. Jean-Marie Vincent and Marie-Noël Tournoux from the Convention France/UNESCO were in Riga on 20 Dec. to participate in the seminar: ‘Preservation and Development of Riga Historical Centre Today and in the Future.’

Junko Taniguchi, WHO Asia Unit, was in Afghanistan from 19-23 Jan. to elaborate the nomination dossiers of Bamiyan Valley, Núshobad and Bandi e Amir, and to organize a capacity-building activity with the Afghan authorities and the UNESCO Kabul Ofﬁce. On 10 Jan., she was in Tokyo, where she discussed with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBC) the Ajanta-Elora IBC Conservation and Tourism Development project, and future cooperation between WHO and IBC. Giovanni Boccardi, WHO, Chief Arab States Unit, and Mario Hernandez, WHO, specialist Information Management, were in the United Arab Emirates from 9-15 Jan. to meet with Ofﬁcials, on implementing the World Heritage Convention, ratified in 2001 by the UAE. Fernando Brugman, joined the WHO in Sept. 2002 as an associate expert from the Netherlands. He is trained in the ﬁeld of International Relations and history, and is currently working on the state of conservation of Spanish sites and the periodic reporting for the EuropeNorth America region.

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